



## ***511 Virginia – Traffic and Travel Information***

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

- **What is 511 Virginia?**

511 Virginia is an easy-to-use telephone system and Web site providing statewide traffic and travel information for travelers in the Commonwealth.

- **What information does 511 Virginia offer?**

511 Virginia offers users a variety of real-time traffic and travel information including road construction, traffic conditions, traffic incidents, transit information, weather conditions, gas, food, lodging and more. Businesses pay a sponsorship fee to be listed on the service.

- **How can I access 511 Virginia?**

511 Virginia can be accessed any time by dialing 511 from any wireless or landline phone (home, office, etc.), or by visiting [www.511Virginia.org](http://www.511Virginia.org). Outside of Virginia, the telephone service can be accessed by calling 1-800-578-4111. TDD-TTY can call 711 and ask to be connected to 511.

- **How much does it cost to use the 511 Virginia service?**

Calling 511 from a landline phone will cost the same as making a local call; wireless phone users will incur no extra charges by calling 511. However, it will use minutes on their calling plans (roaming charges may apply). Accessing the system's Web site is free.

- **How is 511 Virginia updated? How current is the information?**

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Virginia State Police provide 511 Virginia with its information; the service is updated within minutes of notification from VDOT and the state police of an incident or condition.

- **How does the information available from 511 Virginia differ from the travel information I receive from radio and television reports?**

With 511 Virginia, users can expect to find considerably more route-specific information than one hears in a traffic news slot. In addition, users can access the information on demand 24/7, whenever they need it.

- **How does the VDOT Highway Helpline differ from 511 Virginia?**

By calling the VDOT Highway Helpline, 1-800-367-ROAD, callers can report unsafe roadway conditions as well as request work for state-maintained roads. Callers can be connected to the Highway Helpline through 511.

- **Is the call service difficult to use? Will I have to key in several numbers to reach menus after I dial 511?**

No, this service is built to be convenient. 511 Virginia is voice activated so callers can simply speak to navigate the phone menu – there are no buttons to push unless the caller wants to use that feature. Though 511 is voice-activated, for safety reasons it is recommended that travelers call before they go or pull over before using the system.

The 511 telephone service has what is known as a “barge-in” feature. This means that the caller doesn’t have to listen to the entire menu – he/she can interrupt the system at any time to get needed information. Regular callers will learn the menu system quickly and find it easy to give the necessary responses to get the information they need.

- **What areas does 511 Virginia cover?**

511 Virginia is a statewide service offering information for 98 roads, including every mile of Virginia’s interstates. In August, VDOT added 55 major routes to the service; these include, but are not limited to:

U.S. Routes 1, 17, 29, 58, 301, 360, Fairfax County Parkway, Prince William Parkway, and state Routes 5, 76 (Powhite Parkway), 267 (Dulles Toll Road), 288 and 895 (Pocahontas Parkway).

Other major routes will be added over time. Callers can also transfer to the Kentucky and North Carolina 511 telephone services.

Since February 2002, 511 has been available to travelers on Virginia’s I-81 Corridor. Before that time, the service was known as “Travel Shenandoah.”

- **Is the 511 service available in other states?**

The 511 service is currently available statewide in Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South

Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Virginia and Washington state. Also, 511 is available in certain metropolitan areas of California and Ohio.

- **What does this service cost VDOT?**

Between now and 2010, the service will cost approximately \$2 million a year, which is paid with federal ITS funds.

In comparison, one mile of a four-lane interstate costs about \$12 million.

- **How will people find out about 511 Virginia?**

Signs for the 511 Virginia service have been placed approximately every 12 – 15 miles along every interstate highway in Virginia. Other methods of creating awareness include radio and other media advertisements and sponsorships.